

I am adamantly opposed to Section 14 of S.B. #1196, the section which deals with the proposed land swap in Haddam. The deed for that 17.4 acre piece of property indicates that "hereinafter described premises, being located on the Connecticut River, a prime natural feature of the Connecticut landscape, has high priority recreation, fishery, and conservation value, and is consistent with the state comprehensive plan for outdoor recreation and the state plan of conservation and development and should be retained in its natural scenic or open condition as park or public open space." To me that wording in the deed means that this piece of property is legally bound to remain as park or public open space. Not just last year and this year, but forever, for the benefit of Connecticut residents. The State of Connecticut agreed to this deed restriction when the deed was conveyed.

We are on a very slippery slope if land which has this conservation designation can be swapped for another piece of property. Why would anyone consider donating or selling a parcel as open space to the State of Connecticut if the State can then turn around and totally ignore the deed restriction? Frankly, this proposed land conveyance seems so wrong to me that I am mystified as to how it has again surfaced. A developer's desire to embark on a project - even if it creates jobs - should not trump the clear intent of language in a legally binding deed.

This issue has state-wide, long-term ramifications. I am a Middletown resident, but I have a huge stake in this issue. Section 14 of S.B. #1196 severely threatens Connecticut's treasured open spaces.

Mimi Rich